



Name of Project: Lifelong Communities Initiative

Organization: Kansas Department on Aging

Principle of Choices for Independence: Empowerment/Access to Information and Services

Description

The Kansas Department on Aging is sponsoring the Lifelong Community Initiative to assist Kansas communities to better plan for and serve the elders of today and the future. The quality of life for citizens of **all ages** in the community is enhanced through this initiative because of improved access to quality health care, an efficient transportation system, universal designed housing for the continuum of life, community-based services and activities, and customer-friendly businesses.

Through the Lifelong Community Initiative process, a community utilizes a self-assessment tool to identify current strengths and opportunities for improvement in services and issues impacting elders. The tool is divided into six categories: government, community services, businesses, housing, transportation, and health care. The community uses the findings from the assessment to develop action plans with both short-term and long-term goals.

The Lifelong Communities initiative is a six-step process. Communities must: 1) obtain support from units of local government, 2) complete the community self-assessment tool, 3) develop a mission, vision, and priorities, 4) develop an action plan, 5) implement the action plan, and 6) obtain verification and designation. Communities completing this process will be designated a "Lifelong Community" by the Kansas Department on Aging.

The Kansas Department on Aging partners with the local community's Lifelong Initiative steering committee. Area Agencies on Aging provide training and technical assistance to the community. Currently, there are nine communities participating in the program. Six will be added during the coming months with a June public affairs event planned.

For more information on the Lifelong Community Initiative visit the Kansas Department on Aging website at

<http://www.agingkansas.org/kdoa/programs/LifeLong/lifelongcommunity.htm> or contact

Blanche Parks at BlancheParks@aging.state.ks.us or (785) 296-0463